

# Focus on Extension Home Economics



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## **DIMENSIONS OF EXTENSION HOME ECONOMICS**

The Home Economics program of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System, provides education to help families identify their needs and use their resources for making decisions which can improve the quality of family living.

Extension education encourages an environment in the home and community that promotes maximum development of children, young people and adults in their roles as individuals, family members and as productive citizens.

The educational needs and interests of persons differ widely according to age, life cycle stage, education, occupation and socio-economic level. Thus, Extension home economics programs are channeled to specific clientele—4-H and other youth, young families, families with young children, parents and adolescents, disadvantaged families, older adults, and women in Home Demonstration Clubs, Extension Home Economics study groups and other organized groups.



## **HOUSING AND HOME FURNISHINGS**

Changing life styles combined with the current economic situation, a materials shortage and increased standardization have greatly affected housing and furnishings choices. Today, families are concerned with the problems of securing housing and furnishings that will result in maximum satisfaction for the money invested.

Extension housing and home furnishings programs help families explore housing choices, and equip families with skills and information needed to achieve maximum comfort, convenience and livability.

Educational programs are designed to teach selection, use, care, construction and renovation of home furnishings, in addition to home improvements, remodeling and maintenance projects. Various construction techniques and the comparative advantages of renting and home ownership also are covered.

The programs can result in an improved quality of living for Texas families.

## COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Extension home economics programs help to improve the quality of life for all families by extending education beyond the home into the community. Working with other organizations and groups, Extension community environment and leadership programs help create awareness of and interest in community services and facilities. They also provide relevant and unbiased information on public issues. Priority is given to helping individuals develop leadership skills for becoming actively involved in community affairs that affect their lives.

Recreation, as an integral part of the entire community, is a point of emphasis in Extension home economics programs. Because the quality of life depends in part on how leisure time is utilized, the programs are concerned with the development of leisure skills through recreational leadership, informal education and social group work.





## **FAMILY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Helping families develop skills in the efficient management of resources to meet individual and family needs is the goal of family resource management. Through participation in these educational programs families learn to understand and adjust to economic influences.

Emphasis is given to the importance of planned spending based on family values, goals and needs, retirement and estate planning, and the cautious use of credit.

Families learn about new consumer laws and product standards, and how these laws affect their personal lives and the goods and services they use. Consumers also are made aware of the problems of fraud and deception, as well as possible sources of help.

Additional programs are offered to help individuals manage the work of the home, including time and energy management, and the selection, use and care of household equipment.

## **FAMILY STABILITY**

Increasing family strengths is the objective of Extension's program in family stability. Personal growth of individuals, improved relationships and more satisfaction within the family are goals of the program.

Program topics include effective child rearing, helping adolescents adjust to adulthood, assisting adults with marriage and parenting, and preparing for life events such as marriage, parenthood, crises and retirement.

The older adult population of Texas is a special point of emphasis for Extension family stability programs. Education for persons approaching or in retirement includes health, housing, nutrition, leisure, continuing education and participation in community affairs.





## **FAMILY HEALTH**

Family health programs cover two major areas—foods and nutrition and health education.

### **Foods and Nutrition**

A recent nutrition survey indicated that many Texas families have inadequate diets. In addition, consumers have been faced with high and fluctuating food prices. Extension foods and nutrition programs are directed toward helping consumers buy food economically in order to provide nutritious meals and snacks for their families. Special attention is given to consumer interests such as nutritional labeling and food safety, and the changing nutritional needs throughout the life cycle. Because of the concern over food prices, information on food preservation has gained increasing popularity.

On-going nutrition education programs are directed toward families with special needs, such as families with limited incomes, food stamp recipients and the elderly.

### **Health Education**

The aim of Extension's health education program is the same as that of the World Health Organization, helping people achieve good health through their own actions and efforts. Since a sig-

nificant number of Texas citizens are medically underserved, in that health services and health manpower are not adequate to meet their needs, Extension programs focus upon education for preventive medicine rather than crisis medicine.

In addition to specific major diseases, areas of vital concern include the low immunization levels of preschoolers, increased adolescent pregnancies, lack of prenatal care, the venereal disease epidemic and drug use. Extension health education programs strive to improve the health status and environment of each Texas citizen.

## **FAMILY CLOTHING**

The family clothing program provides information to the consumer on principles of clothing and fabric selection, planning for individual clothing needs, the use, performance and care of textiles, expressing oneself with clothing and consumer rights and responsibilities.

Clothing creation and design education emphasizes self-expression through the choice of art principles and construction techniques most effective for each individual.

The goal of the clothing program is to help individuals learn to clothe themselves and other family members attractively, comfortably and economically.





## **PROGRAM CONTENT**

Planning, selecting, buying and caring for clothing and textiles

Clothing construction and renovation

Consumer rights and responsibilities regarding textile legislation

Clothing contributions to self-concept and specific social roles

Adjustments in everyday living

Child development

Child guidance techniques

Creative living in older adulthood

Families and family life

Family relations through the life cycle

Preparation for retirement

Youth and today's world

Nutrition and health throughout the life cycle

Food buying, preparation and service

Food safety and sanitation

Nutrition for persons with special needs

Making decisions about family resources

Managing family income

Family financial security

Helping consumers choose and use goods and services

Selection, use and care of home appliances

Managing the work of the home

Furniture selection, use and care

Furniture renovation

Applying design principles and elements to home furnishings

Financial and legal aspects of housing

Remodeling and improving homes

Home maintenance and repairs

Selecting housing to meet family needs

Worthy use of leisure time

Skills and techniques of recreation leadership

Developing community and human resources through leadership training

# LEARNING THROUGH EXTENSION HOME ECONOMICS

Educational information is readily available to all Texans through the county Extension agents, who are usually headquartered in the county seat. They teach through workshops, home visits, short courses, special interest groups, result demonstrations, correspondence, home demonstration and 4-H clubs, direct mail, and other types of mass media—television, radio, newspapers, magazines and special publications.

Leadership development is a distinctive feature of the home economics program, and is the means of extending information to growing numbers of individuals and families. The county Extension agent teaches volunteer leaders, who in turn teach adults and youth.

## HOW THE PROGRAMS ARE ADMINISTERED

Extension Home Economics programs are provided through public funds derived from three sources—county commissioners' courts, The State of Texas and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Administration of the program is by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, a part of the Texas A&M University System. Citizens in each county, assisted by county Extension agents (home economics) and Extension specialists, develop programs according to local interests and needs.

For more information, contact your local county Extension agent (home economics).

*Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic levels, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.*

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